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Chairman: Mr. Koudelka ..... (Czech Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Eradication of poverty and other development issues

(a) Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/60/84, A/60/115 and A/60/314)

(b) Women in development (A/60/162)

(c) Human resources development (A/60/318)

1. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/60/314), said that the choice of theme — the centrality of employment to poverty eradication — was intended to raise general awareness of the pivotal contribution of productive employment to poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. Statistics showing half of the world's poor to be aged between 15 and 64, and hence of working age, and 61 per cent of the workforce to have been unemployed in 2004 failed to reveal the critical link between work and poverty. In fact, most of the poor in developing countries were not unemployed, driven as they were by the basic need for survival to do any work available, even when it was poorly paid, unproductive and did not raise them above the poverty threshold. While economic growth did lead to poverty reduction in developing countries, it did not always generate a faster rate of poverty reduction; nor was the reverse true.

3. The most crucial factor was not the actual growth rate, but the growth elasticity of poverty, which depended not only on the number of growth-generated jobs, but also on the extent to which they benefited the poor. The moral, then, was that the poor must acquire the skills and assets needed for them to take full advantage of job expansion. Truly pro-poor growth required countries to channel resources into the sectors in which the poor worked and lived and into the assets they possessed and to display sensitivity to the needs of poor women.

4. The report also addressed security and human rights and their links to growth and poverty reduction. It suggested that opportunities for productive work transcended income alone: unemployment and underemployment were widely acknowledged as critical factors in the link between development and poverty, but they were also the root causes, and the result, of insecurity. In the wake of a major conflict or crisis, job creation was crucial for maintaining peace and security, involving people, as it did, in rebuilding and sustaining their communities.

5. Respect for human rights and dignity was an essential element of poverty eradication and the very foundation of access to productive employment. The promotion of basic human rights and social justice and the elimination of discrimination were essential to human dignity, poverty reduction and social and economic development. The key message of the report was that the creation of productive employment must be the focus of macroeconomic policies so that all workers, especially the poor, could secure productive employment in conditions of equity, security and human dignity.

6. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on human resources development (A/60/318), he said that success in lifting developing countries out of poverty and marginalization depended largely on the ability to provide individuals with the means to lead decent, productive lives, to expand their opportunities and to put them at the centre of development. Public-policy approaches should address all the dimensions of human resources development, including a wide range of sectors vital for meeting basic human needs, because social and economic investments had proved to be mutually reinforcing, and investment strategies that involved both forms of investment were likely to trigger a virtuous cycle of sustainable economic growth and development that could better withstand international and economic shocks.

7. The report focused on key challenges and made recommendations concerning economic innovation, the spread of HIV/AIDS, increased competition in international markets, and the pressures of migration. The developing countries must urgently receive international support if they were to implement effective investment strategies focused on both economic growth and human resources development.

8. Studies had demonstrated the important role of women in poverty eradication and sustainable development. Countries must therefore give special

attention to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the human resources component of their development strategies with a view to ensuring the full participation of women in economic, social and political life.

9. Another challenge was the "brain drain", driven by the lack of job opportunities at home and the increasing international demand for skilled labour, the shortage of which in key sectors in the industrialized countries' economies had triggered an exodus of professionals from the developing to the developed countries. The former had become major providers of skilled labour, with all that it implied for their future economic prospects. Despite the transfer of knowledge and technology and the remittances that flowed from migration, the overall impact on their economies was negative. Cooperation and partnership were needed if all countries were to benefit from skilled-labour mobility. A more equitable distribution of the benefits of skilled-labour migration could be achieved through "brain circulation" — or short-term migration — which would reduce the losses to the developing countries, and through boosting economic opportunities in those countries in order to reduce migration incentives.

10. The report also addressed the role of knowledge, science and technology and the public sector and underscored the assistance given by United Nations agencies to countries endeavouring to develop their human resources.

11. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/60/162), noted that the number of women in the labour force had risen from 1 billion in 1993 to 1.2 billion in 2003. However, they were more likely than men to work in the informal sector, which was characterized by lower wages and insecurity of contracts, benefits and social protection. Indeed, 60 per cent of the world's 550 million working poor were women and, because of their disproportionate share of unpaid household chores, many of them were obliged to work part-time.

12. Women were usually relegated to jobs that prevented them from attaining managerial status. Women in the service sector worked mostly in community, social and personal services requiring fewer skills than the male-dominated financial and business services. They were also in demand in labour-intensive service industries because they supplied cheap, flexible labour; but global competition had made for a general lowering of their wages and had limited their bargaining power. Although the flexibility of teleworking had opened up new opportunities for women, who could now work from home, the fact that they teleworked in addition to their domestic chores imposed a double burden on them, compounded by their need, in most cases, to provide their own computers and pay for electricity and Internet service. Also, many migrant women worked in health-sector jobs that followed time-honoured gender stereotypes and paid less than typical male jobs. A further problem was women's "de-skilling", whereby many highly educated women from developing countries undertook unskilled or semi-skilled work.

13. Policies must enable both sexes to benefit from service-sector opportunities, mitigate the negative effects on women and focus on gender-related human-rights protection. Other areas of international migration and development in which a gender-sensitive approach would be appropriate were remittance procedures, trafficking in persons, and information and communication technology, especially the impact on rural women.

14. **The Chairman** invited Committee members to ask questions or make comments.

15. **Ms. Haycock** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, suggested that the Assistant Secretary-General and the Director should offer advice on tailoring the recommendations in the respective reports to the requirements of countries with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, especially in the light of the feminization of the pandemic and countries' need to invest simultaneously in the health and service sectors.

16. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development) said that HIV/AIDS-related problems, especially with regard to younger people of working age, raised many serious challenges. Dependency rates changed dramatically with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, since most victims could no longer contribute to the economy and became increasingly dependent on the family or extended family. AIDS orphans were often taken in by grandparents with greatly diminished income. All the implications of HIV/AIDS for poverty reduction were

not yet fully known, despite attempts in some countries to assess its impact.

17. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) observed that it was often women who tended HIV/AIDS patients in hospitals, in the community and at home, a situation which was compounded by their inferior access to resources and other facilities, including the flow of resources for the care of HIV/AIDS victims. Moreover, while girls were often removed from school to help women in their tasks, it was more important for substantial investment to be made in girls' education and to ensure that they completed their schooling not only for their own benefit, but also in the interests of future economic development. The unequal burden of care of children, the elderly and the sick in the context of the pandemic was another topic for study.

18. **Mr. Torrington** (Guyana) asked for comments on the impact of massive migratory movements of skilled labour on developing countries.

19. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development) said that important proposals concerning the future of migration, especially that of skilled labour, were currently being discussed by experts and others. Both general restrictions on migration and specific restrictions on recognition of the skills possessed by migrants, especially professionals, had an impact on the framing of migration policies.

20. One recent proposal advocated "brain circulation" — as opposed to "brain drain" — whereby skilled or professional workers could migrate for a finite period, at the end of which they would be required to return home. While other variations on that theme had been discussed, little had yet been said about the possibility of stemming such emigration or of compensating developing countries for the cost of training skilled workers or professionals who chose to emigrate.

21. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) noted that many women were now migrating for work, rather than simply to follow husbands or family members. Those women contributed significantly to the countries of destination through their work and to the countries of origin through remittances and other forms of support. On the positive side, migration empowered women and increased their development potential when they were exposed to new ideas as well as earning money. In addition, women remaining at home when men migrated assumed new roles and family responsibilities, including the responsibility of administering the remittances received.

22. The negative factors, however, included the loss of migrant women's skills to the home countries, the harsh working conditions the women often encountered, the aforementioned "brain drain" and "de-skilling" of professionals, not to mention the violence to which women might be subjected. Indeed, the Third Committee had recently adopted a resolution concerning violence against migrant women workers. There was also evidence — albeit anecdotal — that many women systematically remitted a part of their earnings at great personal sacrifice and did not invest in their own education, health or food security, a problem that would need to be addressed in the high-level dialogue scheduled to take place during the General Assembly in 2006.

23. **Mr. Leglise-Costa** (France) said that the two concepts that work must be productive and must be a source of decent employment were mutually reinforcing and should be addressed in tandem. Noting that there was a fair degree of system-wide convergence regarding the decision to make employment — especially decent employment — a central objective in national and international poverty-eradication policies, he asked how the United Nations system could help to implement it, given that every country had its own situation and priorities. The heads of State and Government had also decided that by 2006 each country must establish national development strategies incorporating the Millennium Development Goals and other goals, affording yet another opportunity to mainstream the productive and decent employment goal. The various components of the United Nations system must begin to provide the necessary support.

24. **Mr. Sundaram** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), responding to the previous speaker's question, said that the United Nations system promoted the concept that national development strategies should include macroeconomic policies that placed sustained focus on the creation of decent and productive employment. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs consistently endorsed the work of the International Labour Office, particularly in the area of employment generation, which continued to be a

major focus of the Department's work. The Division for Development Policy Analysis and the Division for Social Policy and Development worked assiduously on the subject of employment generation, the theme of various reports issued by the Department and the basis for the technical cooperation assistance provided to the Governments of some developing countries.

25. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) said that the Commission on the Status of Women would be addressing the economic advancement of women at its fiftieth session in 2006, when issues related to decent work, such as occupational segregation, wage gaps and other forms of discrimination would be examined. Millennium Development Goal 3 on reducing gender disparity in education included the employment of women among its indicators. United Nations entities were already supporting Governments in employment issues and stressing the importance of mainstreaming employment issues and integrating gender perspectives in all aspects of national strategies.

26. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) drew attention to the statement he had made in celebration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in October 2005, in which he had spoken of lack of consistent action in fulfilment of the promise to lift the poor out of poverty. As the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) drew to a close, it was disheartening to note that poverty had actually increased in the poorest and weakest segments of the international community, the least developed countries.

27. The report of the Secretary-General on the interrelated dimensions of poverty and the efforts made towards its eradication highlighted the key elements for the attention of the Committee. Although developing countries had in general made progress in reducing poverty since the previous decade, extreme poverty had drastically increased in sub-Saharan Africa, which had the highest level of working poor. Although the least developed countries had made strides in creating an enabling environment for poverty eradication, including extensive economic and governance reforms to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and mobilize additional domestic resources, the results fell far short of expectations. Freedom from their debt burden and increased external resources for development to generate employment were the critical elements that would help rid the least developed countries of the scourge of poverty.

28. He drew attention to the characteristics of the working poor in developing countries, as identified in the report of the Secretary-General, namely, the feminization of poverty, the preponderance of poor people in agriculture and in the increasingly informal nature of employment and work. After referring to the International Year of Microcredit, 2005, he praised microcredit as an effective tool for poverty reduction which contributed to the creation of employment, empowerment of women and development of human resources.

29. **Mr. Blake** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that the daily poverty threshold of $2, below which 47.9 per cent of the world's workers and their families lived, was lower than the subsidy paid for a cow in Europe and the United States. The *Report on the World Social Situation 2005: The Inequality Predicament* revealed a global increase in the number of people living in poverty compared with the late 1990s.

30. The Group agreed with the Secretariat that employment was crucial to growth and poverty reduction, but, additionally, urgent attention should be given to encouraging the poor to undertake entrepreneurial ventures in order to create their own employment and build wealth. In addition, the factors that robbed them of income from their produce should be addressed: policies having a detrimental effect on prices for output, wages and savings and constraints on public sector expenditure, particularly in rural areas, must be reviewed. In short, as a number of experts had explained to the Committee, many current policies were working against the poor.

31. In order to tackle the major challenge of poverty, such issues as decent employment, access to resources for entrepreneurial development and international trade, monetary and fiscal policies must be addressed. The Group endorsed the view expressed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/314) that policies for poverty reduction should promote both faster growth and growth with higher elasticity. Given the dynamic nature of poverty creation, however, and the short time left in which to achieve the internationally agreed poverty reduction target, there was a need for more

proactive responses by the international community. The recommendations of the Secretary-General therefore needed to be strengthened to enhance access to productive resources and encourage entrepreneurship and enterprise development, to increase international cooperation and coherence between international policies, especially trade, fiscal and monetary policies, and make them pro-development and consistent with national objectives, and to enhance human resources capacity for higher, more creative and productive employment.

32. Turning to the subject of women in development, he noted that the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/162) focused on the benefits received and the challenges faced by women especially in the growing services sector and the gender perspectives of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). It contained a number of conclusions, which should be carefully evaluated for further action.

33. On the subject of human resources development, he welcomed the insightful approach of the report contained in document A/60/318, which recognized the cross-sectoral and comprehensive nature of human resources development and its role in achieving national development and the internationally agreed development goals. The Group wished to draw special attention to the issues and challenges raised in respect of the migration of highly skilled and educated persons. There was clearly incoherence between national and international policies, as developed countries actively recruited or welcomed highly skilled and educated persons without consideration for the level of investment by developing countries in their training and, at the same time, refused to consider wider labour movement within GATS. The recommendations in the report on converting "brain drain" into "brain circulation" in order to create a virtuous cycle for development deserved serious consideration, and some of the issues should be addressed in the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006.

34. **Mr. Duong Hoai Nam** (Viet Nam) said that his Government shared the view that the fight against hunger and poverty should be at the forefront of the international agenda if targets on poverty reduction were to be fulfilled. While there were a number of reasons for the persistence of poverty, the unfair and inequitable international trading system and the lack of financial resources were the main obstacles to the implementation of programmes and projects designed for poverty eradication.

35. International trade was a powerful engine for sustained economic growth and a critical source of finance for development. Distortions in the world market for agricultural products, the main exports of developing countries, continued to undermine the ability of the agricultural sector in those countries to contribute meaningfully to economic development and the fight against hunger and poverty. The phasing-out of agricultural subsidies was a key element for the success of trade negotiations within the World Trade Organization. Viet Nam therefore welcomed the European and United States initiative to reduce export subsidies, a gesture of good faith that must be recognized.

36. Hunger and poverty eradication required a multidimensional approach and action at the national, regional and international level. With official development assistance (ODA) in the short and medium term expected to remain at insufficient levels, an estimated sum of US$ 150 billion was needed annually to meet the goals established in the Millennium Declaration. Viet Nam wished to join international efforts to find new and innovative financing and instruments to complement traditional ODA flows.

37. Since 1993, Viet Nam had reduced its poverty rate by 60 per cent, thereby halving poverty ahead of the schedule set by the Millennium Development Goals. Substantial progress had also been achieved in the provision of free health coverage to 88 per cent of the poor, and 400,000 new houses had been built. As a result of its own experience, the Government was convinced that it was essential to utilize all available resources in all areas, including capital construction, public utilities, investment and human resources development.

38. Peace and security were not achievable in a world in which 1.2 billion people struggled to survive on less than 1 dollar a day. The fight against poverty required comprehensive, systematic effort and more effective mobilization and use of all resources. It was therefore crucial to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations organizations and agencies, especially those involved in development and poverty reduction.

39. **Ms. Oddsen** (Norway), welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on women in development

(A/60/162), said that gender segmentation in the labour market and the poor working conditions, low wages and inadequate security encountered by female workers were issues that must be addressed in order to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work was commendable, and she called for the universal ratification of the ILO conventions on workers' rights and gender equality in the labour force.

40. Her delegation agreed with the Secretary-General regarding need to improve the collection of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data in order to be able to take informed decisions on gender equality in employment. The Secretary-General's recommendations on the elimination of discrimination against migrant women workers must be heeded, if men and women were to derive greater benefit from the empowering and development potential of migration.

41. International migration had important implications for public health systems. Together with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it was exacerbating acute shortages of health-care workers. Approximately 80 per cent of the victims of human trafficking were women and girls, who frequently suffered severe reproductive health consequences. Her Government therefore urged the United Nations to establish policies and practices to address gender equality concerns and migration from a development perspective.

42. Despite the commitment in the Millennium Declaration that everyone would benefit from information and communication technology, that goal remained a remote hope for the vast majority of people. Moreover, although information and communication technology had produced employment gains, sex segregation in the information economy persisted.

43. The international community should strengthen efforts to position gender mainstreaming, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health at the forefront of the development agenda. Her Government would intensify its support to initiatives with a clear gender perspective and would increase its contributions to the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM). It would consider favourably other United Nations organizations that placed emphasis on gender equality.

44. Reaffirming her Government's commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2005 World Summit Outcome, she said that, in order to achieve gender equality at the country level, gender perspectives needed to be mainstreamed in all United Nations operational activities. They must permeate such sectors as economic development, environment and infrastructure, as well as education and health. Her delegation looked forward to the report on system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 2006, and would strengthen its follow-up on the gender policies of United Nations funds and programmes.

45. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that one positive aspect of increased international trade in services was the cross-border movement of persons, which had become the main vehicle for greater participation by women in the export of services in developing countries. The downside of such labour flexibility was often lower wages, the possible loss of formal contracts, social security and other benefits. One of the reasons for the foregoing was that women were more likely to find employment in the informal economy than men. A recent disturbing trend, which must be addressed, was the shift to temporary migration and an increase in undocumented migrants, which often led to illegal trafficking in human beings.

46. Efforts to combat trafficking in human beings should be a priority for all, as most States were affected either as countries of origin, transit or destination. Iceland, for its part, had invested considerable resources in raising public awareness of human trafficking and had hosted three conferences in as many years on various aspects of the problem. Iceland's commitment to the international fight against that scourge was demonstrated inter alia by its participation in a Nordic-Baltic Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings and the financing, since 2003, of the post of a female anti-trafficking officer within the Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

47. **Mr. Wang** Qi (China) said that while poverty eradication had been recognized time and again as one of the toughest challenges facing mankind, there was still a long way to go in achieving that lofty goal. Countries must shoulder their respective responsibilities and jointly promote global efforts to eradicate poverty. Developing countries must formulate

poverty reduction strategies tailored to their specific circumstances and combat poverty and backwardness through their own painstaking efforts, while developed countries had the duty to render greater assistance to the developing countries by honouring their commitments to provide financial aid, transfer technology, grant debt relief and facilitate market access. International organizations should play a greater role in that regard by ensuring follow-up to international conferences and exploring new ways in which international multilateral bodies could provide assistance.

48. In its efforts to create a favourable external environment for the economic growth of developing countries the international community should: respect the right of those countries to choose their own path of economic development; further improve the international financial system to foster an orderly trade environment and a stable financial environment; promote a sound multilateral trading system that was open, fair and non-discriminatory; and manage globalization in such a way as to ensure equitable development opportunities for people from all countries, thus eliminating the breeding ground of poverty. Since poverty eradication was the common responsibility of society as a whole, Governments, enterprises and civil society organizations should conduct broad-based dialogues, mobilize resources and create innovative poverty alleviation mechanisms.

49. In China, the most heavily populated developing country in the world, the number of people living in poverty had dropped to 26.1 million and the poverty rate had fallen to 2.8 per cent. Nonetheless, his Government was keenly aware that China still had sharp imbalances between urban and rural areas and between regions. In that regard, it would adopt stronger policy measures, strengthen accountability and ensure a timely realization of the strategic goals contained in the Development Platform for Rural Poverty Alleviation. China's effort was an important component of global efforts against poverty. In May 2004, his Government had hosted a World Bank-sponsored world conference on poverty reduction, where it had announced a donation of $20 million to the Asian Development Bank to inaugurate the "China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund". In May 2005, as a follow-up to that conference, the China International Poverty Eradication Centre had been formally established in Beijing; its purpose was, among other things, to explore new theories, strengthen international interaction and promote South-South cooperation. The establishment of the Centre not only demonstrated China's determination to be part of the global fight against poverty but would also contribute to poverty eradication.

50. **Mr. Ben-Tura** (Israel) said that his country was deeply committed to the eradication of poverty and placed special emphasis on enhancing the role of women in development. Micro and small enterprises played a particularly important role in generating new sources of income and ultimately improving the status of women. Microfinance contributed directly towards alleviating poverty and enhancing gender equality. However, credit made available to poor women should be part of a larger mechanism for enhancing their status, such as helping them engage in micro-enterprises. In that context, he referred to a number of domestic and international initiatives pursued by Israel to enhance the role of women in small business development, including through international training seminars, the establishment of government institutions and international cooperation. He also touched on the work of the Small Business Authority and that of the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center. The latter had trained more than 11,500 women from around the world and had been dealing, since 1961, with the issues of concern raised by the Beijing Platform for Action.

51. **Mr. Bouchiar** (Morocco) welcomed the decision by a majority of developed countries to establish a calendar for meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of GDP for ODA, the approval by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank of the Group of Eight proposal to cancel the multilateral debt of some of the poorest countries and the adoption of the World Bank Group's Africa Action Plan. Poverty alleviation, especially in rural areas, was the cornerstone of Morocco's socio-economic policy and a prerequisite for any sustainable development initiative based on equity and the effective participation of the population concerned. It was felt that greater progress could be made with regard to enrolling village girls in schools, reducing the isolation of villages and improving sanitation if such activities were part of a strategy. King Mohammed VI had accordingly launched a National Human Development Initiative in May 2005 to eliminate social and regional differences, combat poverty and promote more equitable and sustainable

development. Poverty could be banished from Morocco only if the major impediments to economic, social and political advancement, including the external debt service burden, the heavy budget deficit and youth unemployment, were addressed. In that regard, he invited the developed-country partners, the United Nations and international financial institutions to become more involved in Morocco's human development efforts.

52. In order to provide the necessary support to countries of the South in combating poverty, the international community must step up its efforts to achieve all agreed international goals, including the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Developed countries, international financial institutions and United Nations programmes should help to integrate poor countries into the multilateral trading system and facilitate their access to developed country markets, support the structural reforms undertaken by developing countries and reduce their debt, increase ODA, and meet the specific needs of least developed countries, especially those in Africa, while supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

53. **Mr. Abujela** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that progress in the eradication of poverty had not been equal to the aspirations of the developing and the least developed countries. His delegation was concerned to note that the lack of equality had given rise to instability and to the spread of extreme poverty throughout the world and threatened the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the most important of which was reducing by half the number of people suffering from extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. The worsening problem of external debt had exacerbated the problems of inequality, poverty and hunger. His delegation agreed with the statement in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/155) that promoting basic human rights and social justice and eliminating discrimination were essential for human dignity, as well as for poverty reduction and improving the human condition in accordance with international human rights instruments and declarations.

54. The achievement of the goal of poverty eradication required more than just high economic growth because the causes of poverty were numerous; the availability of productive work would contribute substantially to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Consequently, the generation of employment should become an essential objective of national and international policies within poverty eradication strategies. The emigration of highly skilled labour from the developing to the developed countries had undermined the economic capacity of those countries, leading to shortages in vital sectors such as health care and education, thus impeding their economic development and also their ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

55. His country supported the efforts of the United Nations on behalf of the developing countries, including the promotion of growth and development and the eradication of diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) had emphasized the renewed commitment to the eradication of poverty, continuing economic growth and sustainable development and global prosperity for all. His delegation also emphasized the implementation of that resolution with respect to meeting the special needs of Africa, which was the only continent that had no expectation of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Concerted and concrete measures were therefore needed to enable the developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by becoming part of the world economy and sharing effectively in the process and benefits of globalization.

56. **Mr. Widhya** (Cambodia) said that poverty eradication was a top priority for his Government in its efforts to promote sustainable social and economic growth and maintain political stability. Employment generation remained a critical challenge for Cambodia's long-term development. His Government had tried to diversify the economy and move away from its heavy dependence on agriculture and light industries, particularly textiles, to agro-business and services, particularly tourism. In order to alleviate poverty in rural areas, the Government had introduced a public investment programme to rehabilitate and strengthen infrastructure and expand social services together with a measure to strengthen microfinance services in those areas. It had also undertaken a comprehensive macroeconomic and structural reform programme, including the enactment of financial establishment legislation, and it had recently adopted a Land Act to stimulate private direct investment in the country.

57. While considerable efforts had been made in least developed countries to mobilize domestic financial resources, the international community must remain firm in its commitment to help those countries break the vicious cycle of poverty. In particular, the developed countries must allocate 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their GNP as ODA to the least developed countries by 2010 and increase market access for developing-country products. In that regard, they must remove the heavy agricultural subsidies which were having a devastating impact on the poor subsistence farmers of the South. Concerted efforts and genuine compromises must be made at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in order to make globalization beneficial for all.

58. **Mr. Lolo** (Nigeria) said that poverty persisted because of the international community's collective failure to commit its knowledge and resources to the fight against that scourge. The time had come to shift the focus of the international debate from abstract notions of the nature and structure of poverty, which were well known, to the practical measures required to address the challenges of poverty. To eradicate poverty and empower women, economic opportunities, political freedoms and an enabling national and international environment must be provided so that individual initiatives and enterprises could prosper. He supported the call for more comprehensive economic, labour and social policies that promoted economic growth and employment generation. The aim of such policies should not only be to achieve fiscal balances and generate employment, but to also put more power in the hands of the poor through qualitative jobs and decent incomes.

59. Policies must also address the distorting differentials between prices and wages. In that regard, he welcomed the recognition that donor support should focus, inter alia, on the provision of insurance programmes, employment guarantee and price stabilization policies to help stricken countries deal with transient and absolute poverty. Women, who were often marginalized, underpaid and excluded from economic and social opportunities, needed to be given adequate protection and support. It was equally vital to put in place supportive global programmes and coherent and consistent development policies as well as to resolve the external debt crisis in order to pave the way for the achievement of strategic national development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. Human development strategies that were integral to national development programmes must take full advantage of scientific knowledge, information and communication technology and multi-stakeholder participation. While Governments had a crucial role to play through, inter alia, increasing spending on infrastructure, health, education and shelter, the United Nations system must also play a leading role in mobilizing international support to that end.

60. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) said that eradicating poverty was a moral imperative that deserved the sustained attention of the United Nations and all Member States. He hoped that it was no longer taboo to acknowledge the indispensable role in eradicating poverty of competitive markets, which allocated resources efficiently by signalling the relevant information. Economies were fearful of the notion of market failure, but in most places where there was pervasive and extreme poverty markets had failed because Governments had not allowed them to succeed.

61. The idea that poverty could be eradicated by major cash transfers from the public sectors of rich countries to the public sectors of poor countries was not realistic. Eradicating poverty involved increasing productivity, through the accumulation of capital and skills over time. There was much to be gained, too, by removing barriers that held people back from realizing their potential. For example, it was well established that educating girls and giving them equal opportunities led to better health for women and children and to more productive economies. Eliminating discrimination against women was not only a matter of justice, but also good economic policy.

62. **Mr. Ndjonkou** (International Labour Organization) said that ILO based its work in the area of poverty eradication on social justice and the twin concepts of entitlements and equity; achievement of the latter involved developing both economic and social capabilities. The approach used by ILO emphasized that poverty reduction required economic growth with a substantial reorientation in favour of the poor.

63. Experience had shown the relevance and the demand for integrating an employment-centred perspective into poverty reduction programmes and strategies. Poverty reduction must be based not merely

on generating employment, but also on improving the working conditions that had contributed to poverty in the first place.

64. Education and training were a central pillar of the ILO decent work agenda, since skills development was a key element in the promotion of productive employment. Decent work was the best anti-poverty programme and the best route to socio-economic development and personal well-being. It was therefore necessary to improve complementarities between all the different means of action and levels of intervention.

65. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) referring to the International Year of Rice, 2004, said that rice was the staple food for more than half the world's population and could play a role in providing food security and eradicating poverty, which were closely interrelated. Thus, poverty eradication was not achievable without food security and vice versa. For more than half the world's population food security depended on an adequate supply of rice, which had become the most rapidly growing food source in sub-Saharan Africa in the last decade.

66. Increased employment opportunities and income were essential for poverty eradication, and rice cultivation was the principal employment and source of food and income for millions of households in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In addition, the support services for rice-based systems had created additional sources of employment and income for millions of people around the world, and the engine for industrial development in many countries. In Asia, the transformation of rice grains into other products employed a large share of the workforce.

67. However, since 2000, rice production had been lower than rice consumption at the global level, and the land and water resources for irrigated rice production continued to diminish. The declining prices of rice on the international market since 1995 had caused a sharp drop in the return from rice production, which had been one of the major causes of poverty and hardship for many small farmers in developing countries.

68. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that rice-consuming populations were often afflicted with protein-energy malnutrition and vitamin A deficiencies and that the intensification of rice production with inadequate application of pesticides had caused significant damage to agricultural biodiversity and also environmental pollution.

69. More than 800 activities had been implemented in 68 countries throughout the world during the International Year of Rice, which had reconfirmed that rice would continue to be a global food crop on which billions of people depended for their daily energy and protein intake. The sustained increase of rice production and the diversification of rice-based production systems, which were essential for poverty eradication, called for the development of technologies, economic models and investments that kept pace with the changing patterns of human development.

70. **Mr. Kau** (Fiji), referring to the eradication of poverty, said that his Government had set itself the goal of reducing poverty by 5 per cent a year and was focusing on developing an integrated approach to achieve that goal, and also to implement the Millennium Development Goals. However, national Governments could not achieve the Goals without appropriate international support.

71. Market reform was especially necessary, to provide improved market access for developing countries. Equitable trade policies were critical for eliminating poverty. The report of the Secretary-General on the centrality of employment to poverty eradication (A/60/314) had noted that the growth of agricultural productivity was the strongest predictor of the reduction of extreme poverty. But, the agricultural exports of developing countries could not compete on the international market unless the terms of trade were more equitable.

72. Employment alone was not sufficient to eradicate poverty. Developing countries needed to create stable jobs that paid a living wage; but better jobs required a more highly skilled workforce, which highlighted the need for international support for training activities.

73. The report of the Secretary-General on human resources development (A/60/318) had addressed the issue of the migration of skilled workers, which was of special concern to the Pacific Island nations. Fiji called for the establishment of networks linking migrants with their home countries to facilitate the flow of knowledge, technology, investment and trade. The transfer of skills and experience by expatriate businesses and workers could strengthen the capacity of the domestic workforce. Government should be

encouraged to provide infrastructure and incentives to help channel remittances into savings, businesses and investments.

74. The interrelationship of the Millennium Development Goals was particularly evident in the case of women, since gender equity was a cross-cutting theme. The issue of gender wage gaps posed a challenge to development that needed to be addressed. Fiji had established a microfinancing programme aimed at enhancing the social, economic and political status of women.

75. **Mr. Husain** (Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)), referring to the item on women in development, said that the international community had been aware for some time of the adverse impact of the movement towards urban areas on the lives of families, particularly women and children, but, with the emergence of globalization, the movement across international borders had multiplied the risks for vulnerable groups, and social protection for women who migrated in search of employment needed to be reinforced.

76. In accordance with the teachings of Islam, OIC upheld the dignity, welfare and well-being of women and recognized their potential contribution to economic growth and development. A ministerial conference was being planned to consider specific measures to enhance the role of women in societal development and to provide more opportunities for them in public life.

77. While the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/60/162) stressed the importance of eliminating discrimination against migrant women in employment in the service sector, there was also a need to combat trafficking in migrants and to protect women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation and coercive adoption.

78. Women required access to credit and to information and communication technology, as well as access to and control over productive resources and market information. To address those and other concerns, the First Forum for Businesswomen in Islamic Countries had been held in March 2005. It had called for providing technical assistance and skills development to improve the expertise of women in different branches of industrial and commercial activity.

79. With regard to the image portrayed in the media of the status of women in the Islamic world, he emphasized that Islam granted equality to women and men in all aspects of social and community life; they could work, save and invest. To adapt to the changing times, OIC member States were reviewing the needs of women with a view to facilitating their constructive roles in the resurgence of Islamic society as it modernized, harmonizing the best of its traditions with the requirements of the contemporary world.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.